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From: sperry325@cox.net
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 10:26 AM
To: gaemail
Subject: SB426 Comments and Support

Below are my comments and support to Senate Bill 426 - "An Act Concerning Geographic Information Systems Data Sharing" being reviewed on Wednesday March 21, 2012 at 1:30P.M.

The snow storm last Fall crippled Connecticut in so many ways. The biggest, next to the mass destruction of property, was the lack of coordination and communication between utilities and local municipalities. We constantly heard about local communities taking on their own to conduct damage assessment surveys and providing that information back to the utilities in hopes to expedite remediation efforts. It should not take a disaster to facilitate an ad hoc form of coordination. That's why I feel very strongly that Bill 426 will put in place those communication and data sharing channels relative to geographic information system (GIS) data.

I recently moved to Connecticut from Michigan where I've spent 17 years of my GIS professional career dealing with data sharing and coordination. The same issues with data sharing with utilities in Michigan are very similar to what is happening here in Connecticut. The major road block the utilities seem to hide behind has always been the homeland security curtain without even looking at what facilitates good data sharing stewardship compared to a security risk.

Below I listed the benefits that both the utility, municipality and regional governments can achieve:

1. Faster response with data sharing during an emergency.
2. Data maintenance agreements between utility and municipality. This can be a great way to save money for both entities and reduce duplication. There's nothing worse than not maintaining data due to funding cuts.
3. Right A Way tree maintenance mapping. Many municipalities know where encroachment of trees are a problem with power lines. What better way to share this information via GIS to the utility to again expedite the fix before a problem occurs.

This is only a small sample of the many benefits that can happen when there is GIS data coordination and sharing. Connecticut is relatively a small state but I'm continually amazed at how much GIS technology is used in both the public and private sectors. While this a great achievement there is always the challenge in maintain these programs when funding is cut. It has been proven in so many ways that data sharing and coordination saves money. What better way to be good stewards of tax payer dollars than to encourage this as it relates to GIS data.

This bill is a great start in doing just that.

Steve Perry